

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Wayzata High School boys track and field team on winning the Minnesota State championship.

After coming up just short the last 2 years, the Trojans were boosted by strong performances from distance runners Jaret Carpenter and Connor Olson. In addition, Wayzata was led by Wesley Jackson's second-place finish in the long jump, Tyler Didier's third-place finish in the 400-meter dash, and a number of strong relay teams. It absolutely was a complete team effort.

These athletes spend practice after practice pushing themselves and each other to reach their personal bests. In addition, every single one of these student athletes still manage to meet and excel at other school, family, and social obligations.

Mr. Speaker, the families, teachers, friends, and entire community are very proud of these high school champs.

Congratulations to Coach Aaron Berndt and the Wayzata High School boys track and field team on a job well done.

ISIS PROMOTES SLAVERY

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, according to news reports, ISIS is holding competitions at mosques to celebrate Ramadan. Here is the challenge: memorize the Koran. The prize—get this—is a young female sex slave.

As a father and a grandfather, I am repulsed by the fact that young women—just kids—are being handed out like door prizes in a Koran contest. Second and third place apparently receive the same reward, kidnapped young teenage girls.

This competition is advertised on flyers and marketed to young males. The arrogance, barbarity, and brutality of this terrorist enterprise has no limits. ISIS pillages, rapes, and kills their way across the Middle East. They brazenly broadcast decapitations, slowly drown people in cages, and burn captors alive.

ISIS is an enemy of all states. Its terrorist reign of religious genocide threatens all humanity in a path of murderous anarchy. The world must ban together to destroy these subhuman radical jihadists.

Justice demands these killers be held accountable for their crimes against all peoples of the world, including little girls.

And that is just the way it is.

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY 50TH ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. CURBELO of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Florida

International University on the celebration of their 50th anniversary earlier this week on June 22.

This great accomplishment gives all Floridians an opportunity to recognize this special institution and all who have contributed to FIU's success throughout the years should be proud.

FIU is located in Florida's 26th Congressional District, where over 17,000 of my constituents are enrolled as students and an additional 2,400 graduated last year. In my time serving south Florida in Congress, I have witnessed this university's passion for helping students seek higher education to better themselves while giving back to our community.

Mr. Speaker, south Florida is a place where people from all over the world come seeking opportunity and success; many find it at FIU.

On the occasion of FIU's 50th anniversary, I salute all those who have dedicated their careers to improving the lives of scholars. I know many proud graduates who today are leaders in our community.

Once again, congratulations. I know that the next 50 years will bring even greater success and achievement.

Go Panthers.

PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS: ADDRESSING GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. As we do almost every week, my colleagues and I are here on the floor this evening to urge the people's House to take up the issues that matter to the people.

This week, we are still reeling from the tragedy in South Carolina. My colleagues and I are urging Members on both sides of the aisle to take a look at an issue we have consistently and painfully avoided for years, what we are doing to prevent gun violence.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE).

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Second Amendment and Americans' rights to reasonable, responsible gun ownership; but it is time for us in America to admit we have a problem.

When I see more than two dozen people shot in one weekend in my hometown of Detroit, when I see the face of

a deranged and hate-fueled young man—a man who should have never had a gun but was able to destroy the lives of nine amazing people who welcomed him into their church in South Carolina—I know it is time for America to embrace commonsense gun control.

In the span of about 24 hours, 27 people were shot and 3 were killed in Detroit, Michigan. It is a city that I represent, along with my esteemed colleague Congressman JOHN CONYERS. The FBI and the Detroit Police Department confirm that, in the city of Detroit, overall crime is down; yet gun deaths are on the rise.

Ninety percent of Americans who were polled want universal background checks for gun purchases. That is 90 percent. What are we waiting for?

There is not a Member of Congress who has not been touched by gun violence. That includes one of our own, a colleague that was highly respected, Gabby Giffords.

How many more deaths must families and communities endure? How many more funerals must we attend? How many children must be orphaned? How many parents must suffer the unspeakable heartbreak of losing a child?

There is no question that we must act, and we must act now. How many times must we watch on national news what uncontrolled gun violence can do to our country?

That action must focus on three principles: establish universal background checks; eliminate the gun show loopholes that allow a person to walk in, pick up a gun, and walk out the door; and enforce our existing gun control laws.

We have seen countries all over the globe who are not experiencing the gun violence that we have here in America, and their citizens have the right to own guns.

It is time for us to awaken from a sleep of the past and address this issue and address it now.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. I thank the gentlewoman for taking the time to join us and sharing that important message. I join her in her sentiments.

I now yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY).

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding as we continue this important conversation.

Every day in America, we navigate the threat of gun violence. From metal detectors in public buildings to shooting safety drills at schools and movie theaters, guns affect how we live and whether we live at all; yet, when gun violence intruded into the most sacred of places, piercing the peace of prayer at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, it stirred a sickening sadness within us.

□ 1745

It was a searing reminder that there is no corner of our country that offers a haven for us when guns end up in the wrong hands.

We are here today because of Charleston, to remember the lives of the nine souls who were lost. It is a ritual we have on automatic repeat, again and again, massacre after massacre, as an end run around real gun reform.

We have the conviction covered. What we have lacked in Congress is the courage to do the right thing. The Charleston 9 are victims of this lack of courage, as are the 30,000 Americans who die each year from gun violence.

For the first time in history, this year, gun deaths are on pace to be the leading cause of death of Americans aged 15-24. We are losing a generation of young Americans to guns. The future of our Nation is, quite literally, at stake.

All across America, children are growing up in fear. Kids play tag indoors. Mothers second-guess on letting their children walk to school. Some studies suggest that repeated exposure to shootings in some communities is akin to the trauma suffered by soldiers in war zones.

We as a nation have accepted gun violence as a fact of life. But we are better than this.

In the Kelly Report on Gun Violence in America, I outlined a number of effective strategies to stop the bloodshed, which includes expanding gun background checks.

I implore my colleagues to listen to your conscience and the conscience of the country you represent and work with me to chart a new course for a safer America. There is overwhelming public support for commonsense gun reform. Responsible gun owners support responsible gun laws. We can strike a sensible balance on gun reform that protects our Second Amendment rights while also ensuring the basic human right of all Americans to live free from gun violence.

How many more massacres must we endure? How many more innocent people will we allow to be murdered on our watch?

The time has come for Congress to have the courage of our convictions, to honor through action by expanding background checks to keep these depraved killers from getting their hands on guns, and the other gun safety laws that we have talked about in the past.

We have the power to stop the next Charleston, Newtown, and Aurora so that no other American city becomes synonymous with gun tragedy. We have the moral imperative to stop an epidemic that claims more casualties than war and disease, combined.

Congress must put saving American lives at the top of our agenda. We owe it to the Charleston 9 and to all who have fallen before them, as we owe it to a generation of young people at risk of meeting a similar fate.

I thank the gentlewoman from New Jersey.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. I thank the gentlewoman for her remarks, and I associate myself with the concerns raised through them.

Mr. Speaker, my heart is heavy right now. I never thought that I would be in Washington representing the people of the 12th District in the State of New Jersey, but never in my wildest imagination did I think that I would be on the floor of this body mourning the nine Americans murdered for the color of their skin in the midst of worship, at a church that was part of the fight for our civil rights.

In what has become a disturbingly routine order of events, we watch, horrified, as the helicopter circles a church, a movie theater, a college campus, or a school. A breaking news headline parades across the screen, keeping track of the developing details. The next day, we debate the mental stability or motive of the shooter. We ask where they purchased the weapon. We ponder the merits of changing our Nation's laws to keep more Americans safe. And then, inevitably, we do nothing, and the cycle repeats.

The rate of mass shootings has steadily risen since 2000. President Barack Obama has himself addressed the Nation for at least a dozen of these incidents since the beginning of his first term. We are the only developed nation in the world that has this problem, and we need to wake up and ask ourselves why.

We are told that more guns will keep us safe. We are told that requiring background checks for every purchase, with no exceptions, is too intrusive. We are told that our constitutional right to bear arms should cover every weapon, from a simple handgun to a machine gun, whose only purpose is to cause massive and irreparable harm.

Mr. Speaker, we are here tonight because we know that these statements are, at the very least, misleading and, more likely, outright falsehoods.

We stand together on behalf of the millions of Americans who agree that the shooting in Tucson, Arizona, that wounded one of our own should have been our last; that the lives lost in Aurora, Colorado, should have been the last; that the babies we lost in Newtown, Connecticut, should have moved us to change the ease with which we allow access to firearms.

We are asking our colleagues on both sides of the aisle whether they are willing to make this newest addition to a painful list the very last. I hope when we close our remarks this evening that every one of us will see the need for change.

Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield to a fellow freshman, who has introduced legislation today that would keep firearms out of the hands of criminals, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BEYER).

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, every day, 88 Americans are killed by guns. The gun homicide rate in the U.S. is 20 times higher than other developed nations. How long before enough is enough?

Today, I am introducing the Keeping Guns from Criminals Act, common-

sense gun violence prevention legislation that will close a loophole in current Federal law, that allows straw purchasers and gun traffickers to funnel firearms to felons, juveniles and other restricted purchasers, with little to no risk of being prosecuted.

While Federal law clearly prohibits the sale of a gun to a felon or other persons deemed not eligible to possess a firearm, the standard required to prosecute violators is so high that law enforcement is rarely able to bring charges. Only if the prosecutor can prove the seller knew the buyer was prohibited from purchasing a gun are they able to successfully prosecute. So unenforceable is the current statute that, on average, only 75 such prosecutions occur every year.

My bill would make it easier to prosecute these bad actors by making the sale of a firearm a strict liability. It is a crime, and the onus is on the seller to know whether the buyer is in the prohibited class of customers. No longer would a gun trafficker or irresponsible gun seller be able to claim they didn't know a purchaser was a criminal or had a restraining order against them or was on a terrorist watch list. No longer would we be tying the hands of law enforcement and preventing them from enforcing laws to protect our children. No longer would a prosecutor have to prove the intention or knowledge of wrongdoing required under current law.

Mr. Speaker, no doubt, one of the arguments against this bill will be a complaint that a background check places an onerous burden upon the seller. But consider this: the seller and prospective buyer need only go to one of the many Federal Firearms Licensees, or FFL, who provide a private property transfer with a background check for only about \$30.

And consider that there are 130,000 FFLs in the United States. That is roughly nine times as many McDonald's as there are.

Mr. Speaker, everyone, even the National Rifle Association, agrees that we have a responsibility to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous criminals. This legislation is a step in that direction, and I encourage my colleagues to please support it.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for those remarks.

Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday, Dylann Roof walked into Emanuel AME and stole the lives of nine innocent Americans. In the days since, somehow we have lost track of the real problems. We keep talking about a flag, a flag that is a symbol of many of our Nation's most glaring problems, but it is only a symbol.

I don't want to get too far off track, but I do want to make something perfectly clear. Symbols may matter, but they don't matter as much as the actions of police who consistently treat black men and women with clear and biased disregard. Symbols don't matter

as much as the mandatory sentencing laws that have propped up a prison industry with hundreds of thousands of Black men. Symbols don't matter as much as the predatory loan structures that put Black homeowners underwater and decimated the Black middle class, practices that banks were never truly held accountable for.

So, alongside those calls to take down the flag, I would appreciate calls to acknowledge that persistent racism is not the only problem here. Pervasive and unnecessary gun violence is also one of our Nation's most pronounced flaws.

Mr. Speaker, let me say this: I fully support the permanent removal of the Confederate flag. It represents one of the darkest stains on our Nation's history. It represents baseless hate, disrespect for the civil rights and freedoms this Nation was founded upon, and enduring mistreatment in communities of color.

But if we are really about the business of ending discrimination once and for all, we need to enact policies that will counteract everything that that flag represents: job training that ensures all of our communities are qualified for the jobs of the future; education that lets our students succeed, regardless of where they live; and affordable housing that exists outside of the urban centers, in the communities that can offer folks the jobs they need to get on their feet and to climb to the middle class.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentlewoman from New Jersey for her consistent leadership and, particularly, her friendship, her passion for her district, and her commitment to policies that will lift all of us together as Americans.

This is the first time, Mr. Speaker, that I have had an opportunity to speak on the floor of the House since the moving and horrific tragedy that occurred in Charleston, South Carolina, to be able to first publicly express my deepest sympathy to the families that now mourn.

I think this may be the longest period of time that I have had a chance to speak. My recollection may be that I offered sympathies last week.

But to take a moment to explore the heinousness of the acts of the perpetrator who knocked on a door that was not closed, entered a sanctuary that did not reject him, walked down some stairs to a historic basement that reminds all of us of our church basements across the Nation, being that houses of worship, in particular, African American churches, will have their Sunday or Sabbath school in areas that are basements, particularly along the northern and eastern coasts.

We know that Sunday or Sabbath school is particular to all of our many denominations in the Protestant faith, and every one of us understands that weekly Bible study that, through the traditions of our lives, we have seen

our families and grandmothers and grandfathers, aunts and uncles, and those of us who joined in Bible study. In fact, Mr. Speaker, a Bible study is a phenomenon of the American church, the Protestant Church, where people gather to study and to understand the Word.

I said in a memorial service in Houston, it is a time of joy, a time of pain, a time of explaining one's self, and a time of redemption. And you feel good, for you join with your fellow travelers, and in a weary week, midweek, you come and restore yourself.

I can imagine that during the time that this evildoer was there, there was a lot of laughing or asking questions about the Scripture; might have been some joyful, argumentative interpretation, where Bible study participants give their perception or their interpretation. I know this because, if you have gone, you know what Bible study is all about.

In the course of that, the evildoer, filled with the sickness—and I hesitate to say “cancer.” Cancer is something that people do not voluntarily seek, but we know that cancer can eat at a body and kill someone.

So the cancerous racism that this individual possessed and internalized and, in fact, duped himself and took the medicine and continued to fill himself with a deadly concoction that was going to do nothing but kill him, but before it killed him, he felt compelled to kill someone else.

The money that he received for the celebrating of his 21st year, very young years—I guess what breaks my heart is how, in those young years, he could become so hateful. For as I said, he came into a place that did not reject him. He went down the stairs in a place where people were rejoicing.

□ 1800

And he, at the conclusion, after sitting next to Reverend Doctor Senator Pinckney, took out a gun and methodically killed those wonderful families—mothers and grandfathers and grandmothers and a son and father—without a pain.

He took a gun that none of us would raise to any Member on this floor or none of us in our houses of worship would raise to any forlorn traveler, any weary person that would come into our place of worship, whether a mosque, a Catholic parish, a synagogue, a Hindu temple, or any form of Protestant church, big or small.

Houston prides itself on having many, many denominations. In fact, we are now in the middle of Ramadan. Houston has many, many places of worship. I wouldn't venture to say I have been to all all over the world, but I have been to all in the city of Houston, my own congressional district, and each place, in their own faith, have welcomed people in.

We only see where there are evildoers that people would blow up temples, mosques, synagogues, and churches.

This person didn't blow it up a distance away. He methodically did this. And a mother had to watch a son try to rescue those, protect them.

Heroes shown. The stories have not all been told, but we know that there were heroes in the midst. In fact, they all are heroes.

So I come for two reasons. I come to indicate that much of what we heard here today is true, that for us to do honor to those who died in this disastrous massacre, murderous, blood flowing from the church, that it will have to be our actions. It will have to be what we do about education and criminal justice reform.

I almost want to stop myself for the broken recordiness of this because we will only do it in unity. We will only do it after we put aside contentious votes and we begin to say, What will heal America? We will not heal—and we have said this before—on the issue of cancerous racism unless we admit that it exists.

Many of us will present to this Congress a resolution that calls upon the recognition that there are some symbols of hate that we cannot deny. We will frame it in America's unity, as has been noted already earlier today, Governors and State representatives and others of good thought. Mitt Romney, for example, joined with President Obama's tweet that it is the right thing to do, to take down that rebel symbol that has been used to run onto the plantations of yesteryear with individuals clothed in white clothing, providing fear, intimidation, and evil-doing.

Certainly we know the threats that Dr. King received during his life, or Medgar Evers during his life, who was murdered on his front porch, were all circling around people not talking about slavery. They were talking about desegregation and their opposition to desegregation and their support of upholding segregation.

This symbol of evil is not far from our life of 2015. Many of us lived through it and saw the disaster of such. Many of us saw the killing of civil rights workers, bound in hatred and not wanting to change what did not unify America but divided America.

So the guns that I have addressed now for the period of time that I have been here—I passed one of the few gun ordinances in a lawmaking body, the city council, which most people don't realize that some city governments give lawmaking legislative authority to their elected representatives. Houston, a noncity manager government, does that.

And I remember that ordinance, amongst the mayor and city council persons, packed the chambers. People with revolutionary outfits, gun enthusiasts, the NRA, all opposing a simple gun ordinance that said that, if a parent allowed a child to get a gun in their hand and a horrific incident happened, a shooting or the child shot themselves, the parent would be held

responsible. It was some semblance of not taking a gun away, but trying to instill responsibility with guns.

When we talk about this on the floor of the House, why all of a sudden, Mr. Speaker, does it become that we are against the Second Amendment and the National Rifle Association, and that this is going to be the undermining of this powerful organization if we even utter the words “gun responsibility”? Why?

Why in Newtown?

I thought I had seen enough, heard enough when 20 little babies in a corner, no less, 6 adults murdered in a murderous fashion from someone who absolutely did not deserve a gun for whatever the reason, as they took their own life, or someone who now stands on trial in Colorado who decided that a night out with a dad and his daughter in a theater—something that Americans know is part of our American culture. We are just moviegoers. We make the movie industry.

In the old days, in those outdoor drive-ins that many remember were some of the best times with your family—and thank God they didn't cost a lot—or the sophisticated high-tech theaters of today, it is still the same. Dads and little girls are going to theaters together. And this criminally minded person, evildoer, decided to kill 12 or, to our very distinguished colleague, the Congresswoman from Arizona, who was maintaining the dignity of her office, was shot down in the street by a gun, killed a Federal judge and many others, a 9-year-old girl, her staff, whose memory that we continue to mourn.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would offer to say that I joined with Congresswoman WATSON COLEMAN to indicate that the issue of gun responsibility legislation is not even overdue. We are crying out for relief. The violence that is used with handguns and AK-47s and automatic weapons is unspeakable.

We need to close the gun show loophole that allows people to go and get guns at gun shows. The name of my good friend Carolyn McCarthy and John Dingell, they worked together and had compromises. We could not get them on the floor of the House.

We need to go even further. We need to be able to assure that where this evildoer brought the gun, his exposure to the criminal justice system should have disallowed him from purchase until he was completely vetted. Some say that he would have stolen one or gotten one out of the back of a pickup truck, but maybe, Mr. Speaker, he would not have been able to go on that fateful night down those stairs through that open door to kill those blessed souls who were studying the word of the Lord.

So it is a challenge now. I know that those of us in the Congressional Progressive Caucus are Americans. I know that those who adhere to the Tea Party philosophy are Americans. To our various conservative caucuses that are in

the Conference, our Republican friends, to the various caucuses that are in the Democratic Caucus, all are Americans. All felt the pain of the murderous act. In fact, it is almost like we are living in a cocoon. It is not over yet, as these families bury their loved ones.

But I think it is upon us—it is an onerous responsibility—to confront this whole question of racism, as the President has charged us to do, and not do it with another round of conversation, but confronting the fact that we can begin by removing symbols and doing something proactively on changing lives.

Then it is upon us to take on this gun responsibility question, to call the NRA to a table of reconciliation, to master a legislative agenda and an omnibus initiative that doesn't have anyone hiding under tables, that there will be no indictment of whether you are for or against. But we hope the majority would move this legislation forward to change the way young people, people who are on the edge, people who shouldn't have guns get guns and kill people. It is time for this Congress to pass the legislation. It is time for the President to be able to sign the legislation.

Let me thank the gentlewoman from New Jersey for her genuine courtesy extended this evening to allow me to both mourn and condemn racism that has been the plight of many of our people in this country and to, as well, remind us that we are derelict in our duty if we do not pass real serious gun responsibility legislation.

Mr. Speaker, last weekend we were faced with another example of what damage results from easy access to guns. The violence that took place in Charleston, South Carolina last week is something that is not new to our nation but is something that we can and must come together to prevent from happening in the future.

As a senior member of the Judiciary Committee and the Ranking Member of its subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, and the author of H.R. 65, “Child Gun Safety and Gun Access Prevention Act, I am in support of our Congress coming together to find solutions to the issue of gun violence, through gun law reform and active engagement of our communities to get to the heart of these problems.

Today, homicide is the second leading cause of death for young people ages 15 to 24 years old.

Even more disturbing is the fact that homicide is the leading cause of death for African Americans between ages 10 and 24, and the second leading cause of death for Hispanic Americans.

The leading weapon of choice used to kill those victims was a firearm. (82.8% were killed with a firearm.)

Many guns are in the wrong hands, and end up being the highly efficient tools of criminals and mass murderers.

Every 30 minutes, a child or teenager in America is injured by a gun.

Every 3 hours and 15 minutes, a child or teenager loses their life to a firearm.

In 2010, 82 children under 5 years of age lost their lives due to guns.

To put that number in perspective, 58 law enforcement officers died in the line of duty that year.

While preventing the deaths of so many young people should be our highest priority, we also need to address the broader culture of violence that pervades our society.

The Members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus recognize the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing the problem of gun violence in America.

Guns and the harm perpetrated by them impact every American and the events at Sandy Hook and Aurora only underscore how random gun violence events can be; but it is important to appreciate that regular gun violence has a particularly devastating impact on the communities we represent.

We must use the tragedy in Charleston, which took the lives of nine innocent church members, as an opportunity to take action to improve the lives of all Americans.

We need to reform current gun laws and implementing change that will prevent these types of events in the future.

As the Founder and Co-Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus and as a senior Member of the Judiciary Committee, I have listened far too often to the tragic testimony of individuals who have survived or lost loved ones as a result of gun violence.

We respect the Second Amendment, but we understand that supporting universal background checks for all gun sales is not inconsistent with supporting responsible gun ownership. With rights come responsibilities.

And responsible gun ownership requires at a minimum that guns in the home be stored safely out of reach of unsupervised children and making sure that guns are not transferred to non law abiding citizens or the mentally ill.

My bill, H.R. 65 “The Child Gun Safety and Gun Access Prevention Act of 2013”, would do just that.

Mr. Speaker, gun violence has reached epidemic proportions.

We must pass responsible gun violence prevention legislation like H.R. 65 and require universal background checks for all gun sales.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Texas. She has always been a source of information and history. She has always tied our history into our current situation as she has always been someone who has motivated us to think sincerely about the issues of the day and how we can become part of the solution.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I just want to reiterate that I associate myself with every recommendation that this gentlewoman has put forth here. I do indeed believe that we need some sensible gun control legislation. I have even introduced legislation that makes it more difficult to secure ammunition. I do think that that is a very important component of creating a safer environment in this country for all citizens.

I think also that we need to take a serious look at what this type of domestic terrorism is doing and whether or not we are devoting the type of resources that are necessary to ensure that our people are as safe as they can be.

I think that we are very involved and very concerned and very proactive in looking at potential lone wolves, jihadists, ISIS recruitment activities, and things of that ilk, but I question whether or not we are sufficiently engaging in oversight, interventions, and creating tools in order to look at the sites that kind of generate the willingness of people such as Mr. Roof and his desire to do what he did.

So I hope that in consort with what Mr. THOMPSON had earlier released that we are willing to hold hearings on the issue of domestic terrorism. I hope that we are willing to look at policies and procedures that create opportunities and jobs and safer communities and good public education.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your indulgence. I yield the balance of my time.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my friend from New Jersey, Congresswoman WATSON COLEMAN, for organizing this very important special order.

Mr. Speaker, we have a right to safety and to reasonably expect that we will be free from gun violence in our homes, schools, places of worship, workplaces, and communities. Unfortunately, we are not safe. As I said on the House floor the morning after the devastating murders in Charleston, "there are no more sanctuaries in the United States from gun violence."

There is no question that we are not doing enough. We see the evidence in the news every day. Across the country, guns are the number two killer of children under 19 years of age. After Charleston, Newtown, the DC Navy Yard, Aurora, Fort Hood, Virginia Tech—the list goes on—it is clear that we need a comprehensive approach to preventing gun violence.

Just like my colleagues, I have heard from hundreds of my constituents urging me to support commonsense policies that would help save lives from this senseless violence. I have cosponsored legislation to strengthen background checks, improve mental health services, ensure criminals and dangerous individuals cannot purchase guns or ammunition, ban military-style assault weapons, and prohibit large capacity magazines, and yet, none of these commonsense policies have even received a vote on the House floor.

I refuse to stop fighting for this cause as long as 30,000 Americans needlessly die because of guns every year.

In 2013, West Webster firefighter Ted Scardino came to Washington to give testimony on gun trafficking prevention. On the previous Christmas Eve, when Ted responded to a fire in the early morning hours along the shores of Lake Ontario, he had no way of knowing that a gunman had set the fire as part of a murderous plot that would leave him as well as fellow firefighter Joseph Hofstetter injured, and take the lives of two more firefighters, Mike Chiapperini and Tomasz Kaczowka.

The gunman in this case was already a convicted killer. He was not able to legally purchase a gun himself, but was able to easily obtain one after recruiting a young woman who lived nearby. He took her to a sporting goods store where he picked out a Bushmaster semiautomatic rifle and a shotgun, and

just like that a convicted killer had armed himself with military-style guns that he would use to murder two innocent public servants, wound two more, and upend the close-knit community of Webster, NY.

I am deeply embarrassed that this body cannot manage to pass—or even vote on—legislation that would protect our families, friends, and fellow citizens. Tragedy after tragedy happens, and yet we do not act. I am terrified at the thought of what it will take to finally bring this body to action.

INNOVATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to draw the attention of my colleagues and, yes, the American people to a legislative threat to the safety and well-being of the American people.

We dodged a bullet in the last session of Congress about this very same issue that I will be discussing this evening. But today, again, we are in serious jeopardy of having an important right of the American people neutered from them, taken away from them by a power play here in Washington, D.C., being conducted by multinational corporations who have done everything they can to impact on this system while the American people do not know that there is an attempted move against their constitutional rights.

Alerted by an aggressive yet unsuccessful attempt to stop this rigorous and rancorous legislation in the House, the Senate was inundated last year about a similar bill that was supposed to be reform, and it was very similar to the one that I will be discussing today.

□ 1815

There was so much opposition to that bill in the Senate that they simply refused to bring it up to the floor for consideration. The bill had already passed the House; and as I say, today, a similar bill now is making its way through the House and will be on the floor, and it is a great threat to the freedom, security, and well-being of the American people.

What was that issue that was rammed through the House and once it was exposed that the Senate turned it back? Well, it has been an ongoing fight over 20 years, a classic case of crony capitalism that plagues our country. The big guys are trying to diminish the rights of the little guys in order to make more money—surprise, surprise.

In this case, however, what we are talking about, they will not only make more money and take that from the little guys, but it will undermine America's prosperity and security in the long run.

Mr. Speaker, I am certainly not opposed to the profit motive, but first

and foremost, we need to ensure that powerful forces don't change the economic rules in order to enrich themselves.

Unseen by most Americans who are not paying attention, but are paying attention to the important things in their lives: their children, their families, their jobs, their schools, and their churches; but they have been basically unaware that there is an attempt by mega-multinational corporations to undermine and, yes, destroy a constitutional right of our citizens—this in order to fill their pockets at the expense of the American people who don't really understand and even know this power play is going on.

I am referring to an attack on the fundamental constitutional right of the American people to own what they have created. This is a right that has been written into the law at the Constitutional Convention—it is in our Constitution—that is under attack in a clandestine legal maneuver that would neuter America's inventors the protection that they were granted by the Constitution and permit powerful multinational corporations to steal what rightfully belongs to American inventors as granted to them as a right in the Constitution.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, ordinary Americans, of course, are not as able to get their voices heard at times here in Congress and big corporations are. They have whole stables of lobbyists. Tonight, we need to mobilize the American people and have them make sure that they contact their Member of Congress.

I will alert my fellow colleagues to make sure that they pay attention to what is happening in this piece of legislation that is now being rammed through Congress.

It isn't just about, of course, dispossessing. This issue isn't just dispossessing individual inventors. It is a power grab that, if they are successful in undermining the constitutional rights of inventors to own for a given period of time what they have created, this change in our constitutional law will undermine the prosperity that we have enjoyed as Americans.

The less than forthright attack on our patent system will undermine the economic well-being of our working people who depend on the United States to be technologically superior in order so that they can outcompete other peoples in other countries who come from poor societies who work just as hard, but don't have the technological advantage that we Americans have.

Mr. Speaker, the American working people have always had the advantage that they can be more productive because our country permitted the technological development of the means of production that made our workers the most productive in the world.

People are working hard all over the world, but it was the people of the United States who coupled that with